

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 378/92 Fear of torture/legal concern

1 December 1992

VENEZUELA: Luis Alberto ARIAS BELLORIN, 23, student
Henry HINOJOSA, community leader and member of human rights committee
Víctor MARTINEZ NIÑO, 19, member of a human rights organization
Benigno VALERA, deputy in legislative assembly for the COPEI
political party
Arnoldo GUEDEZ, teacher
Yolimar SIERRA (female) teacher
Domingo RIVERO, 60
Francisco ESCALONA, politician
Julio ESCALONA, engineer
Rolando LUGO, teacher
Orlando CHIRINOS, university teacher
Alexis CAMPOS LOVERA, 25, trade unionist in health sector
José del Carmen RODRIGUEZ, student,
Julio RODRIGUEZ
Orangel LOPEZ RODRIGUEZ, 44, member of Socialist League
Nelson VIANA, trade unionist
Rafael CASTILLO, trade unionist
Tony GONZALEZ, student
Joel GUTIERREZ, trade unionist/candidate in municipal elections
and many others

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical integrity of those mentioned above who are among hundreds of people - both civilians and military personnel - arrested by the security forces following a coup attempt by members of the armed forces on 27 November 1992. Those affected include: students, university teachers, political leaders, trade unionists, human rights and community activists, and candidates for the forthcoming local elections on 6 December, as well as members of the armed forces who took part in the rebellion.

Arrests were carried out in several towns and cities including: Caracas, Barquisimeto, Valencia, Maturín, Los Teques, El Tocuyo, Puerto Ordaz and Ciudad Bolívar. Many of them appear to have been carried out on 28 November. Some people were arrested during raids on their homes in the middle of the night. Seventeen students were reportedly arrested during an early morning raid on the Central University of Venezuela (Universidad Central de Venezuela). There is particular concern, in view of the fact that with the suspension of several constitutional guarantees, that the security forces can arrest people without warrant and can hold them for extended periods.

The civilian detainees are reportedly being held by the DISIP (Dirección de Servicios de Inteligencia y Prevención), the Metropolitan Police, (PM, Policía Metropolitana) the National Guard (Guardia Nacional) and the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DIM, Dirección de Inteligencia Militar). In the past, Amnesty International has received reports about the torture of detainees at the hands of all of these branches

of the security forces. Methods of torture include beatings, electric shocks and near asphyxiation by placing plastic bags over detainees' heads. In May 1992, an Amnesty International delegation interviewed several students who had been arrested by the state police of Carabobo following a previous attempted coup on 4 February 1992. The students, among them a pregnant woman, were tortured by the police and were denied access to representatives of the Attorney General's Office (Fiscalía General de la República) and proper medical attention for several days.

Reports indicate that all the civilian detainees are to be tried by military tribunals where there are grounds for serious concern regarding standards of

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independence and objectivity in proceedings against civilians accused of politically-motivated offences. President Carlos Andrés Pérez announced on 29 November 1992 that the detainees were to be given a summary hearing and would be sentenced within ten days.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish, English, French or in your own language:

- urging that the physical integrity of all those detained (including those named above) since 27 November 1992 be fully protected, and that detainees be granted immediate access to representatives (fiscales) of the attorney general's office, lawyers, and relatives and that they are provided with an independent medical examination;
- urging that any reports of torture or ill-treatment be fully and immediately investigated and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- requesting that proceedings against all the detainees be in accordance with international standards for a fair trial and that they be released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Sr. Carlos Andrés Pérez
Presidente de la República
Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente /
Dear President**

Telegrams: Presidente Pérez, Caracas, Venezuela

Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC

2) Minister of the Interior:

Sr. Luis Piñerúa Ordaz
Ministro de Relaciones Interiores
Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores
Carmelitas a Santa Capilla, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Caracas, Venezuela
Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC
Faxes: + 58 2 81 57 96

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear President**

3) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

General (R) Fernando Ochoa Antich
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Casa Amarilla, Esq. Principal, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores
Telexes: 28085
Faxes: + 58 2 83 36 33

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister**

4) Minister of Defence:

General Iván Jiménez Sánchez
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Fuerte Tiuna, Conejo Blanco
El Valle, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Caracas, Venezuela
Faxes: + 58 2 66 28 829

Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister

5) Attorney General:
Sr. Ramón Escovar Salom
Fiscal General de la República
Manduca a Ferrequín,
La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela
Telexes: 24787 FISGE VC

Salutation: Dr. Escovar Salom /
Dear Dr. Escovar Salom

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Organization:

Provea
Apartado 5156
Caracas 1010-A, Venezuela

Daily Newspaper:

Ultimas Noticias
Torre de la Prensa, piso 3
Plaza del Panteón, Caracas, Venezuela

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 January 1993.